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EXAMINER	
AILES, BENJAMIN A	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2142	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/015,072	YAMAZAKI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Benjamin A. Ailes	2142	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *11 December 2001*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-44* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-44* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *11 December 2001* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-44 remain pending.

Priority

2. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file. The priority date for the instant application is 13 December 2000.

Specification

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

- p.1, line 11, "...in his kind..." should be "...in this kind..."
- p. 5, lines 18-19, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 7, line 14, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 7, line 19, "...comprises;" should be "...comprises:"
- p. 8, lines 7-8, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 8, line 11, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 9, line 2, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 9, lines 16-17, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."

- p. 13, line 4, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 13, line 22, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 15, line 5, "...a pier-to-pier basis." should be "...a peer-to-peer basis."
- p. 15, lines 13-16 there is an incomplete sentence. "The circulation time limit processor 13 is configured to refer to the time limit information included in the circulation information file of the received circulation file and." It is unclear what is supposed to come next.
- p. 16, line 1, "...are to added..." should be "...are to be added..."
- p. 17, line 6, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 17, lines 10-11, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 19, line 21, "...or an file..." should be "...or a file..."
- p. 23, line 4, "This latter diagram..." should be "This ladder diagram..."
- p. 24, line 2, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 24, line 5, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 24, line 21, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."

- p. 25, line 14, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 25, line 18, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 27, line 2, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 27, line 8, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 29, line 1, "...a pier-to-pier basis..." should be "...a peer-to-peer basis..."
- p. 29, line 13, "...been facilitates." should be "...been facilitated."
- p. 29, line 17, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 30, lines 9-10, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 30, line 15, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 30, lines 22-23, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 31, line 5, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 31, line 20, "...be obtaining and..." should be "...be obtained and..."

- p. 35, lines 7-8, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 35, line 20, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."
- p. 36, lines 21-22, "...transmission complation report..." should be "...transmission completion report..."

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

4. Claims 1, 10, 12, 18, 32 and 37 are objected to because of the following informalities:

- Claim 1 includes to "a)" steps. Only one "a)" step should be present in order to avoid confusion as to what order steps in the claim should be performed.
- Claim 10, line 9, "...to a approval..." should be "...to an approval..."
- Claim 12, lines 5-6, "...to a approval..." should be "...to an approval..."
- Claim 18, line 5, "...to a approval..." should be "...to an approval..."
- Claim 32, line 5, "...to a approval..." should be "...to an approval..."
- Claim 37, line 3, "...to a approval..." should be "...to an approval..."

5. . Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

7. Claims 14-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claims contain subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claim 14 recites the step "wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, ***notifies incapability of circulation by said next one of said plurality of circulation clients to other ones of said plurality of circulation clients or said transmission client when said next one of said plurality of circulation clients is incapable of circulation***" (emphasis added). Where the examiner has added emphasis is the subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The filed written disclose does not provide any direction as to how one possessing reasonable skill in the art would make the invention perform a test for incapability of circulation by a circulation client. Further, it is unclear based on the written disclosure what factors would qualify a circulation client in terms of parameters and/or thresholds to become incapable of participating in the document circulation process. The written disclosure also lacks any type of working examples that would show to one of ordinary skill how a notification of incapability of document circulation system step would work and therefore one of ordinary skill would not be able to reasonably make and/or use the invention.

For examination purposes, the claims will be given the broadest reasonable interpretation.

8. Claim 15 also recites a step directed towards determining the incapability of sending by a document circulation client and therefore is rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, for the same rationale as set forth above with regards to claim 14.

9. Claim 16 also recites a step directed towards determining the incapability of sending by a document circulation client and therefore is rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, for the same rationale as set forth above with regards to claim 14.

10. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

11. Claim 27-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

12. Claim 27 recites the limitation "the network" in line 2 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

13. Claims 28-39 stand rejected due to their dependence upon independent claim 27.

14. Claim 39 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

15. Line 3 of claim 39 recites "requirement/non-requirement". It is unclear what is explicitly required by the claim by use of the "/" symbol. Proper correction would be to

amend the claim to either state alternative format, "requirement or non-requirement", or inclusive format, "requirement and non-requirement". For examination purposes, "requirement/non-requirement" will be read as the alternative format, "requirement or non-requirement". Appropriate correction and/or clarification is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

16. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

> Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

17. Claims 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 25 and 26 are not limited to tangible embodiments. Claims 25 and 26 recite the use of a "software product" but do not explicitly claim the "software product" being tangibly embodied on any type of computer readable medium. It is unclear from the applicant's filed written disclosure what type of medium is utilized for running and storing the claimed software product. As such, the claims are not limited to statutory subject matter and are therefore non-statutory.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

18. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

19. Claims 1, 4, 9-11, 14-21, 24, 25, 27-35, 38-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Goodale et al. (US 5,125,075), hereinafter referred to as Goodale.

20. Regarding claim 1, Goodale discloses a work flow system for circulating a digital document file to a plurality of clients through a network, comprising:

a transmission client for initially issuing a document file for circulation (col. 1, line 67 – col. 2, line 2), comprising:

a) a setup processing means for setting destination information to specify destination and order of circulation (col. 2, ll. 7-10), and

b) a transmission processing means for sending a circulation information file, including said destination information, and said document file to the next one of a plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information (col. 2, ll. 8-14); and

said plurality of circulation clients for sequentially circulating said document file, transmitted by said transmission client (col. 2, ll. 8-14), each comprising:

a) a transmission processing means for sending said circulation information file and said document file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information, in response to a verification of said document file (col. 4, ll. 46-49 and col. 2, ll. 23-25, clients "vote" for approval).

21. Regarding claim 4, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes report destination information regarding a reporting

destination of said transmission completion report (col. 12, ll. 25-29, originator client is able to view the status of the document file, the document file being able to report status to the originator, therefore the document file knowing the reporting destination is deemed an inherent characteristic.).

22. Regarding claim 9, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes storage location information of a storage destination after the circulation of said document file; and one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, stores said document file to said storage destination in said storage location information in response to a approval operation of said document file (col. 4, ll. 54-63).

23. Regarding claim 10, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said document file for circulation is created from an original document file stored in a predetermined storage (col. 5, ll. 20-23); said circulation information file includes original information of a storage destination of said original document and storage location information of a storage destination after the circulation of said document file (col. 4, ll. 54-63); and one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, obtains said original document file in response to a approval operation of said document file in accordance with said original information, and stores said original document to said storage destination of said storage location information (col. 4, ll. 54-63).

24. Regarding claim 11, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said one of plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and circulation

information file, adds history information including a verification result of said document file to said circulation information file and sends said document file and circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients (col. 4, ll. 46-53).

25. Regarding claim 14, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, notifies incapability of circulation by said next one of said plurality of circulation clients to other ones of said plurality of circulation clients or said transmission client when said next one of said plurality of circulation clients is incapable of circulation (col. 12, ll. 30-36).

26. Regarding claim 15, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends said document file and said circulation information file to other one of said plurality of circulation clients next to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients or a proxy client of said next one of said plurality of circulation clients when said next one of plurality of circulation clients is incapable of circulation (col. 2, ll. 8-14).

27. Regarding claim 16, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, is selectable of either sending said document file and said circulation information file to other one of said plurality of circulation clients except said next one of said

plurality of circulation clients or sending said document file and said circulation information file to a proxy client of said next one of said plurality of circulation clients when said next one of plurality of circulation clients is incapable of circulation (col. 2, ll. 8-14).

28. Regarding claim 17, Goodale discloses a work flow system wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and said circulation information file, adds correction information, for making a correction on said document file, to said circulation information file and sends said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality circulation clients (col. 11, ll. 44-56).

29. Regarding claim 18, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein one of said plurality of circulation clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, sends circulation completion report to other ones of said plurality of circulation clients in response to a approval operation of said document file (col. 2, ll. 8-14, col. 4, ll. 46-49, and col. 12, ll. 32-39 and 46-53).

30. Regarding claim 19, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said transmission client or each of said plurality of circulation clients comprises:

an information processing means for processing electronic information (col. 4, ll. 11-14); and

a storage means for storing a file which is readable with said information processing means (col. 4, ll. 22-26);

wherein said storage means stores said document file or said circulation information file when said document file or said circulation information file is received (col. 4, ll. 22-26).

31. Regarding claim 20, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said transmission client or each of said plurality of circulation clients comprises a display means for displaying a transmission button and sends said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said circulation information file, so as to be stored in said storage means of said next one of said plurality of circulation clients in response to an operation of said transmission button (col. 11, ll. 44-47).

32. Regarding claim 21, Goodale discloses a work flow system for circulating a digital document file to a plurality of circulation clients through a network, each one of said plurality of circulation clients comprising:

a) a setup processing means for setting destination information to specify destination and order of circulation (col. 2, ll. 7-10), and

b) a transmission processing means for sending a circulation information file, including said destination information, and said document file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information (col. 4, ll. 46-49 and col. 2, ll. 23-25);

wherein said circulation information file includes report destination information for specifying a reporting destination of a transmission completion report (col. 12, ll. 25-30); and one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document

file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends a transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said reporting destination in accordance with said report destination information (col. 12, ll. 32-39 and 46-53).

33. Regarding claim 24, Goodale discloses a client in a work flow system for circulating a digital document file through a network, comprising:

a setup processing means for setting destination information to specify destination and order of circulation (col. 2, ll. 7-10), and

a transmission processing means for sending a circulation information file, including said destination information, and said document file to the next one of a plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said destination information(col. 2, ll. 8-14);

wherein said circulation information file includes report destination information for specifying a reporting destination of a transmission completion report (col. 12, ll. 25-30); and one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends a transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said reporting destination in accordance with said report destination information (col. 12, ll. 32-39 and ll. 46-53).

34. Regarding claim 25, Goodale discloses a software product for circulating a digital document file through a network, comprising:

a) a setup processing means for setting circulation destination information to specify a destination and an order of circulation as circulation information file (col. 2, ll. 7-10),

b) a first transmission processing means for sending said circulation information file to the next one of a plurality of circulation clients, which is preset so in said circulation destination information (col. 2, ll. 8-14), and

c) a second transmission processing means for sending a transmission completion report to a specific server in accordance with report destination information, wherein said circulation information file includes said report destination information for specifying a reporting destination of said transmission completion report (col. 12, ll. 32-39 and ll. 46-53).

35. Regarding claim 27, Goodale discloses a work flow system for circulating a digital document file on the network accessed by a plurality of clients, wherein a circulation information file, regarding circulation of said document file, is sent and circulated in said network together with said document file (col. 1, line 64 – col. 2, line 2).

36. Regarding claim 28, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes circulation destination information to specify a destination of circulation (col. 2, ll. 7-10).

37. Regarding claim 29, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation destination information includes circulation order information to specify an order of circulation (col. 2, ll. 7-10).

38. Regarding claim 30, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein one of said plurality of clients, having received said document file, sends said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of clients, which is preset so in said circulation destination information, in response to a confirmation operation of said document file (col. 2, ll. 8-14).

39. Regarding claim 31, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes storage location information of a storage destination after the circulation of said document file (col. 4, ll. 54-63).

40. Regarding claim 32, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein one of said plurality of clients, to which said document file is circulated at last, stores said document file to said storage destination in said storage location information in response to a approval operation of said document file (col. 4, ll. 54-63).

41. Regarding claim 33, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes correction information for recording a correction on said document file (col. 11, ll. 44-56).

42. Regarding claim 34, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said document file to be circulated is an original document file before modifications (col. 5, ll. 20-23).

43. Regarding claim 35, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes history information for recording confirmation results of each one of said plurality of clients which has circulated said document file (col. 4, ll. 46-53).

44. Regarding claim 38, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes report destination information regarding a reporting destination for issuing a transmission completion report that said document file is transmitted to next one of said plurality of clients; and one of said plurality of clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of clients, sends a transmission completion report to said reporting destination (col. 12, ll. 25-29, originator client is able to view the status of the document file, the document file being able to report status to the originator, therefore the document file knowing the reporting destination is deemed an inherent characteristic.).

45. Regarding claim 39, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said circulation information file includes approval requirement/non-requirement information regarding whether an approval operation of said document file is required or not to each of said plurality of clients (col. 11, ll. 57-66).

46. Regarding claim 40, Goodale discloses a work flow system for circulating a digital document file on a network accessed by a plurality of clients, wherein one of said plurality of clients, having received said document file, sends a verified document file to the next one of said plurality of clients in response to approval operation of said document file and sends a transmission completion report to other one of said plurality of clients (col. 2, ll. 8-14, col. 4, ll. 46-49, and col. 12, ll. 32-39 and 46-53).

47. Regarding claim 41, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said other one of said plurality of clients is the one having sent said document file previously to

said one of said plurality of clients, having received said document file and sends said transmission completion report (col. 12, ll. 13-24).

48. Regarding claim 42, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein said other one of said plurality of clients is the one having sent said document file initially (COL. 12, LL. 25-30).

49. Regarding claim 43, Goodale discloses a work flow system for circulating a digital document file on a network accessed by a plurality of clients, wherein one of said plurality of clients, receiving a circulated document file at last, sends a circulation completion report to other ones of said plurality of clients to notify a completion of circulation, in response to the verification of said circulated document file (col. 12, ll. 46-53).

50. Regarding claim 44, Goodale discloses the work flow system wherein one of said plurality of clients, having received said circulation completion report, deletes or makes it possible to delete said document file (col. 10, ll. 53-56).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

51. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

52. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein

were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

53. Claims 2, 3, 5-8, 22, 23, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodale in view of Mori et al. (US 6,526,425 B2), hereinafter referred to as Mori.

54. Regarding claim 2, Goodale teaches the above limitations and further teaches "one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients" in column 2, lines 8-14. Goodale does not clearly teach the step of "sends a transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients". However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein a transaction log is maintained wherein the primary function is to log the circulation history of the document being circulated between clients. The circulation file can be sent along with the actual document being circulated among clients (see column 5, ll. 59-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of logging transaction history of a circulation file taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is

provided so that clients in a network system can stay informed easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

55. Regarding claim 3, Goodale teaches "wherein said transmission completion report is sent to a predetermined server in said network" in column 12, lines 46-53). Goodale does not clearly teach "said predetermined server sends circulation state information in response to a request from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients". However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein clients can access the circulation history of a document by way of request. A client in the system can procure circulation history by way of an order (a request for information) which can be transmitted through the network and to the appropriate server (where the circulation history, the transaction log is stored) (column 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of procuring transaction history of a circulation file as taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is provided so that clients in a network system can stay informed easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

56. Regarding claim 5, Goodale teaches the above limitations and further teaches "one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said

circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients" in column 2, lines 8-14. Goodale does not clearly teach the step of "sends said transmission completion report, regardless of said document file, to said next one of said plurality of circulation clients in accordance with said report destination information. However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein a transaction log is maintained wherein the primary function is to log the circulation history of the document being circulated between clients. The circulation file can be sent along with the actual document being circulated among clients and to the appropriate designated locations (see column 5, ll. 59-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of logging transaction history of a circulation file taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is provided so that clients in a network system can stay informed easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

57. Regarding claim 6, Goodale teaches the work flow system wherein said reporting destination is a server for controlling a circulation of said document file (col. 12, ll. 25-30) and said one of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends said transmission completion report to said server (col. 12, ll. 46-53). Goodale does not clearly teach "said server sends circulation state information in response to a request

from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients in accordance with said transmission completion report". However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein clients can access the circulation history of a document by way of request. A client in the system can procure circulation history by way of an order (a request for information) which can be transmitted through the network and to the appropriate server (where the circulation history, the transaction log is stored) (column 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of procuring transaction history of a circulation file as taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is provided so that clients in a network system can stay informed easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

58. Regarding claim 7, Goodale and Mori teach the work flow system wherein said circulation state information includes a state to which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file fox circulation is circulated, or a state with which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file is confirmed (Goodale, col. 12, ll. 32-36).

59. Regarding claim 8, Goodale and Mori teach the work flow system wherein said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of

circulation clients and having received said transmission completion report, deletes or makes it possible to delete said document file and said circulation information file from a memory portion (col. 10, ll. 53-56).

60. Regarding claim 22, Goodale teaches the work flow system wherein said reporting destination is a server for controlling a circulation of said document file (col. 12, ll. 25-30) and said one of circulation clients, having sent said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients, sends said transmission completion report to said server (col. 12, ll. 46-53). Goodale does not clearly teach "said server sends circulation state information in response to a request from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients in accordance with said transmission completion report". However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein clients can access the circulation history of a document by way of request. A client in the system can procure circulation history by way of an order (a request for information) which can be transmitted through the network and to the appropriate server (where the circulation history, the transaction log is stored) (column 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of procuring transaction history of a circulation file as taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is provided so that clients in a network system can stay informed

easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

61. Regarding claim 23, Goodale and Mori teach the work flow system wherein said circulation state information includes a state to which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file for circulation is circulated, or a state with which one of said plurality of circulation clients said document file is confirmed (Goodale, col. 12, ll. 32-36).

62. Regarding claim 26, Goodale teaches "wherein said specific server controls a circulation of said document" in column 12, lines 46-53. Goodale does not clearly teach "said specific server sends circulation state information in response to a request from one of said transmission client and said plurality of circulation clients". However, in related art, Mori teaches on a document circulation method wherein clients can access the circulation history of a document by way of request. A client in the system can procure circulation history by way of an order (a request for information) which can be transmitted through the network and to the appropriate server (where the circulation history, the transaction log is stored) (column 2, line 66 – col. 3, line 4). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the document circulation method provided by Goodale and the document circulation method of procuring transaction history of a circulation file as taught by Mori. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to perform such a combination as taught by Mori wherein a system is provided so that clients in a network

system can stay informed easily by way of a transaction log which is easily accessible in the network provided (see Mori, col. 2, ll. 62-65).

63. Claims 12, 36 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodale in view of Murakami et al. (US 2002/0161746 A1), hereinafter referred to as Murakami.

64. Regarding claim 12, Goodale teaches the circulation of a document does not clearly recite "wherein said circulation information file includes time limit information for circulation time limit of said document file; and said one of plurality of circulation clients, having received said document file and circulation information file, requests a approval operation of said document file when said circulation time limit of said time limit information is expired". However, in related art, Murakami teaches on this aspect. Murakami teaches the flow of information (i.e. circulation of documents from one client to the next in a networked system) wherein a expiration time is set as a parameter, called the set conditions for the advancement of a document within a network. Murakami teaches the ability for clients to "approve" of documents during the circulation cycle (see Murakami, page 4, paragraph [0080]). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention would have found it obvious to teach the document circulation methods taught by Goodale with the document flow management methods taught by Murakami. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination in order to enhance the management capabilities over the flow management of the document between clients and to decrease the time between a

request made by a client and improve system availability (see Murakami, page 1, paragraph [0011-0012]).

65. Regarding claim 36, Goodale teaches the circulation of a document does not clearly recite "wherein said circulation information file includes time limit information for circulation time limit of said document file". However, in related art, Murakami teaches on this aspect. Murakami teaches the flow of information (i.e. circulation of documents from one client to the next in a networked system) wherein a expiration time is set as a parameter, called the set conditions for the advancement of a document within a network. Murakami teaches the ability for clients to "approve" of documents during the circulation cycle (see Murakami, page 4, paragraph [0080]). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention would have found it obvious to teach the document circulation methods taught by Goodale with the document flow management methods taught by Murakami. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination in order to enhance the management capabilities over the flow management of the document between clients and to decrease the time between a request made by a client and improve system availability (see Murakami, page 1, paragraph [0011-0012]).

66. Regarding claim 37, Goodale teaches the circulation of a document does not clearly recite "wherein said circulation information, requests a approval operation of said document file when said circulation time limit of said time limit information is expired". However, in related art, Murakami teaches on this aspect. Murakami teaches the flow of information (i.e. circulation of documents from one client to the next in a networked

system) wherein a expiration time is set as a parameter, called the set conditions for the advancement of a document within a network. Murakami teaches the ability for clients to "approve" of documents during the circulation cycle (see Murakami, page 4, paragraph [0080]). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention would have found it obvious to teach the document circulation methods taught by Goodale with the document flow management methods taught by Murakami. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination in order to enhance the management capabilities over the flow management of the document between clients and to decrease the time between a request made by a client and improve system availability (see Murakami, page 1, paragraph [0011-0012]).

67. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodale in view of Phillips et al. (US 7,058,696 B1), hereinafter referred to as Phillips.

68. Regarding claim 13, Goodale teaches the work flow system wherein "said transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients, sending said document file and said circulation information file to the next one of said plurality of circulation clients" (col. 2, ll. 8-14), however does not clearly teach the step wherein a transmission client or one of said plurality of circulation clients "encrypts said document file before sending said document file". However, in related art, Phillips teaches a client/server networked system wherein a client encrypts a document before transmitting the document over the network to a remote location, in this example a server (col. 6, ll. 38-41). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention would have found it obvious to combine the document circulation steps as taught by Goodale with

the client/server document encryption/decryption methods taught by Phillips. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to utilize encryption techniques taught by Phillips in order to ensure security so that the client feels confident that no one will be able to view private information once a submission is made to a remote location over the network being utilized (Phillips, col. 6, ll. 33-41).

Conclusion

69. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Hanson et al. (US 6,101,509) teaches a method and apparatus for transmitting documents over a network.

Ichikawa et al. (US 6,681,233 B1) teaches data circulation between servers and clients.

Mori et al. (US 5,040,142) teaches a method of editing and circulating an electronic draft document amongst reviewing persons at remote terminals attached to a local area network.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin A. Ailes whose telephone number is (571)272-3899. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30-4, IFP Work Schedule.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Caldwell can be reached on (571)272-3868. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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baa

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